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SCALE OF ASSESSMENTS FOR THE APPORTIONMENT OF THE EXPENSES OF THE UNITED NATIONS

Letter dated 1 December 1994 from the Permanent Representatives of Belarus and Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from our Governments we have the honour to transmit herewith the text of the joint statement by the delegations of the Republic of Belarus and Ukraine in connection with the consideration of agenda item 112 (see annex).

We believe that the Fifth Committee will take into account the considerations contained in the joint statement and will determine the rates of assessment for Belarus and Ukraine in the new scale in conformity with their real capacity to pay.

We should be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex could be forwarded to the Fifth Committee and circulated as a document of the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

(Signed) Alyaksandr N. SYCHOU
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of
Belarus to the United Nations

(Signed) Anatoliy M. ZLENKO
Ambassador
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ANNEX

[Original: Russian]

Joint statement by the delegations of the Republic of Belarus and Ukraine on the recommendations of the Committee on Contributions at its fifty-fourth session concerning the scale of assessments of Member States to the United Nations regular budget for the period 1995-1997

Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 48/223 B of 23 December 1993, the Committee on Contributions has submitted for consideration by the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session a report on its work and its recommendations on the scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the Organization for the period 1995-1997. 1/

The delegations of the Republic of Belarus and Ukraine attach utmost importance to the stabilization of the financial situation of the United Nations, the main precondition of which is payment by Member States of their assessed contributions on time and in full, and are authorized to state the following.

In recent years, for various subjective and objective reasons, several serious mistakes and conceptual, methodological and procedural abuses have been committed by the Committee on Contributions in determining the assessed contributions of our States. As a result of this, the rates of assessment already adopted by the General Assembly for the Republic of Belarus and Ukraine in the scale of assessments for 1992-1994 have been wrongfully revised upwards by more than one and a half times, from 0.31 and 1.18 to 0.48 and 1.87 respectively.

This happened in 1992 because the Committee on Contributions:

- Failed to take into consideration the fact that the Republic of Belarus and Ukraine were founder Members of the United Nations and that, in spite of the demise of the Soviet Union, the rates of assessment of our States were already included in the scale of assessments for 1992-1993 adopted by the General Assembly;

- Disregarded the basic principle of determining the rate of assessment of any State on the basis of objective indices of its real capacity to pay;

- Failed to apply the scheme of limits to the Republic of Belarus and Ukraine;

- Submitted to the General Assembly a recommendation known to be in conflict with rule 160 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, thus creating a situation which led to a violation of the principle of adoption of decisions by consensus.

The time factor, regrettably, prevented the General Assembly from properly evaluating the discriminatory nature of the recommendations of the Committee on Contributions with respect to the assessed contributions of the Republic of Belarus and Ukraine. Notwithstanding the Legal Counsel's opinion that the recommendations were inadmissible, they were adopted by vote.

At the same time, an understanding was reached, with the concurrence of the Committee on Contributions, on the need to revise the arbitrary and unjustified rates of assessment of the Republic of Belarus and Ukraine for 1993 and 1994, taking into account their real capacity to pay.

In the circumstances the Governments of the Republic of Belarus and Ukraine, mindful of their obligation to fulfil their new commitments and aware of their real economic capacities, felt compelled officially to state their readiness to base their subsequent payments to the regular budget on the rates of assessment contained in General Assembly resolution 46/221 of 20 December 1991, and to propose to the Committee on Contributions, pursuant to rule 160 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, that it should consider the question of fixing fair rates of assessment for the two States.

The Governments of the Republic of Belarus and Ukraine twice proposed to the Committee on Contributions, pursuant to rule 160 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, that it should consider setting their rates of assessment at a level consistent with their real capacities to pay.

However, in preparing the scale of assessments of Member States for the regular budget for 1995, 1996 and 1997 the Committee on Contributions has ignored the specific circumstances of the Republic of Belarus and Ukraine, thus complying only partially with its mandate as contained in paragraph 3 of resolution 48/223 B.

The calculation of the rates of assessment of the Republic of Belarus and Ukraine by the Committee on Contributions on the basis of the statistical data on their economic situation and application of the present scale methodology has provided graphic proof of the absurdity of the earlier recommendations for the upward revision of their assessments and the unjustness of the moral and political damage inflicted on them. This is a point of some importance for our States since it shows that it is possible by a combined effort to overcome earlier mistakes and that the Committee on Contributions is willing to take corrective action.

None the less, it is our firm conviction that the Committee on Contributions still did not act with total consistency and correctness as regards the prompt "restoration of the legitimate right" of the Republic of Belarus and Ukraine to have rates of assessment consistent with their real capacities to pay.

The rates of assessment of the Republic of Belarus and Ukraine for 1995-1997, as the report of the Committee on Contributions on the work of its fifty-fourth session 2/ demonstrates, will still exceed their capacities.

The option of a three-step phasing-out of 50 per cent of the effect of the scheme of limits chosen by the Committee on Contributions for the 1995-1997 scale is inconsistent with rule 160 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly and the spirit of resolution 48/223 B. It is unacceptable to the Republic of Belarus and Ukraine because it replaces them in a particularly discriminatory position.

If attempts are now being made to restore justice "in a humane way", i.e. step-by-step, for States which for years have paid assessed contributions set below their economic performance, then for the States whose contributions for various reasons have considerably exceeded their real capacity to pay, the proposed three-step arrangement to alleviate the effect of the scheme of limits will mean nothing more than a continuation of their financial bondage and their increasing indebtedness.

In addition, the artificial priority given to the undercorrected application of one of the components of the scale methodology will automatically result in erosion of the importance of the other criterion, the capacity to pay, whose effect is already doubtful as regards practically all the Member States which have a rate of assessment above 0.01 per cent. The only basic difference is that, while some States pay below their economic capacity, the others bear a counterbalancing additional financial burden.

A way must be found to accelerate the harmonization of the apportionment of the expenses of the Organization with Member States' capacities to pay in the scale of assessments for 1995-1997. This would benefit not only a large group of Member States but also the Organization as a whole, as it will bring about a speedy improvement in its financial situation.

The phasing-out of 50 per cent of the effect of the scheme of limits called for in resolution 48/223 B can and must be done in one step.

For the Republic of Belarus and Ukraine the problem of their excessive assessed contributions to the United Nations has long ceased to be merely a financial one, for it has taken on a political colouring. Their continuing economic difficulties and their unjustifiably high assessed contributions to the regular budget prevent their Governments from making their payments to the Organization on time.

In addition, in spite of their repeated appeals to the General Assembly, the two States have not been relocated to group (c) for the apportionment of the costs of United Nations peace-keeping operations. This causes a rapid increase in their arrears to the Organization.

The excessive assessed contributions of the Republic of Belarus and Ukraine now place their full-fledged membership of the United Nations and its specialized agencies under a real threat, and this factor will be decisive in determining their position on the draft decisions under this agenda item.

Accordingly, the delegations of the Republic of Belarus and Ukraine call upon the Member States of the United Nations to take into account the specific circumstances of the Republic of Belarus and Ukraine, referred to in paragraph 3

of resolution 48/223 B, the provisions of paragraph 19 of the report of the Committee on Contributions on the work of its fifty-fourth session 2/ and to confirm the proposed rates for 1997 as the rates of assessment for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations for 1995, 1996 and 1997.

Notes

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 11 (A/49/11), para. 60.

2/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 11 (A/49/11).